

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 IO-14 ISO-00 HA-05 ACDA-12 CIAE-00
DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-02
SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 /093 W
-----106371 031829Z /42

O 031805Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3788
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY GABORONE IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN IMMEDIATE

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CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PDEV, RH, UK
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: OWEN INTERVIEW BY THE BBC

FOLLOWING IS EXTRACT FROM BBC1 TV INTERVIEW
OF DR. DAVID OWEN BY ROBIN DAY SHOWN ON EVENING OF
MARCH 2.
BEGIN TEXT:
Q. SECRETARY OF STATE, DO YOU WELCOME THIS NEWS? (I.E.,

THE CONCLUSION OF THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT)

A. WELL, I THINK IT'S SIGNIFICANT. I THINK IT'S THE
START. I DON'T THINK IT'S THE END OF THE PROCESS.
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I THINK WE'VE NOW GOT TO TRY AND SEE IF WE CAN WIDEN
IT OUT AND GET MORE AGREEMENT. WE'VE STILL GOT TWO
VERY SIGNIFICANT NATIONALIST LEADERS OUTSIDE THE
COUNTRY FIGHTING AND I THINK WE'VE GOT TO MAKE A
VERY SERIOUS ATTEMPT TO TRY AND INVOLVE THEM. IF YOU
DON'T INVOLVE THEM, WELL THEN YOU'VE GOT A VERY REAL
PROBLEM BECAUSE YOU'LL BE TRYING TO MAKE THIS TRANS-

ITION FROM WHITE GOVERNMENT TO BLACK GOVERNMENT WHICH IS VERY DIFFICULT ANYHOW AGAINST VERY SEVERE GUERRILLA ACTIVITY. NOW, THE REV. SITHOLE SAYS THAT THE GUERRILLAS WILL GIVE UP THEIR ARMS. THAT ONCE THEY SEE THIS THEY WILL IMMEDIATELY COME BACK. WELL, WE CAN SEE THAT. WE CAN WATCH THAT. THAT WOULD BE, I MEAN IN MANY WAYS A GOOD THING. THEY WON'T WANT VIOLENCE TO CONTINUE. BUT I MUST SAY I'M DOUBTFUL ABOUT THIS. I THINK THAT THEY WILL WANT MORE ASSURANCES THAT MR. SMITH REALLY IS INTENDING TO GIVE UP SOME OF THE MAJOR ENTRENCHED POWERS OF THE WHITES. I THINK YOU'LL NEED TO SEE THE FINAL CONSTITUTION BEFORE YOU'RE REALLY SURE WHETHER, FOR INSTANCE, DISCRIMINATION THAT EXISTS AT THE MOMENT WILL BE ERADICATED.

Q. DO YOU, WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THAT ANSWER AS A WELCOME?

A. I THINK IT'S, EVERYONE WANTS ME TO COMMIT MYSELF TOO EARLY.

Q. NO, I THINK WHAT YOUR CRITICS HAVE SAID IS THEY'D LIKE TO SEE MORE ENTHUSIASM FOR THIS DEVELOPMENT WHICH THEY SAY IS VERY HOPEFUL.

A. WELL, YES, BUT BRITAIN HAS A RECORD OVER THE LAST UNCLASSIFIED

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TWELVE YEARS OF RATHER UNSUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATIONS. I'VE BEEN ATTEMPTING TO GET ONE MAN, ONE VOTE AND A NEW INDEPENDENT ZIMBABWE IN 1978. IT MAY BE THAT BOTH THOSE THINGS CAN BE GOT. I WANT, HOWEVER, AND HAVE BEEN AIMING TO TRY AND ALSO GET PEACE. IT'S VERY DIFFICULT TO HOLD ELECTIONS IN A SITUATION WHERE YOU ARE HAVING LITERALLY PARTS OF THE TRIBAL TRUST LAND, WHERE PEOPLE DON'T FIND IT SAFE TO GO.

Q. IN SEEKING PEACE, FOREIGN SECRETARY, WILL YOU BE NOW EDGING MR. NKOMO AND WILL YOUR COLLEAGUE MR. ANDREW YOUNG OF THE UNITED STATES BE JOINING YOU IN URGING MR. NKOMO TO JOIN IN THE SETTLEMENT IF POSSIBLE, OR IS THAT A WILD GOOSE CHASE?

A. NO, I DON'T THINK IT IS A WILD GOOSE CHASE. I DON'T THINK THEY'LL JOIN IT ON THE SORT OF SALISBURY TALKS. I THINK WHAT YOU'VE GOT TO TRY TO DO IS TO TAKE THE SALISBURY TALKS, TAKE THE PROPOSALS WHICH WE'VE BEEN TRYING TO GET OF A CEASEFIRE AND SEE IF THERE'S A PLACE SOMEWHERE BETWEEN THE TWO WHERE YOU CAN MAXIMIZE THE AGREEMENT AND REDUCE THEM TO THE

VERY MINIMUM, THE LEVEL OF VIOLENCE. NOW IT MAY
BE IMPOSSIBLE TO DO BUT IT'S CERTAINLY PART OF MY
JOB, I THINK TO TRY AND WIDEN THIS AREA OF AGREEMENT.

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YOU'VE GOT A SIGNIFICANT AREA OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN
THREE OF THE PARTIES TO THE GENEVA TALKS OF A YEAR
AGO. TWO OF THE PARTIES ARE STILL OUTSIDE IT.

Q. DO YOU, DOES IT WORRY YOU GREATLY THAT THERE
APPEARS TO BE NO PROVISION FOR BRITISH PARTICIPATION
IN THIS INTERIM GOVERNMENT. THERE APPEARS TO BE NO
JOB FOR FIELD MARSHAL CARVER, DOES THERE?

A. NO, IT DOESN'T WORRY ME AT ALL. IN THE SENSE THAT
I'VE NEVER BEEN VERY KEEN TO ADMINISTER RHODESIA.
BRITAIN'S NEVER ADMINISTERED RHODESIA. WE SAID THAT WE
WOULD BE PREPARED TO DO IT ONLY BECAUSE WE WERE
BEING ASKED TO LIVE UP TO OUR RESPONSIBILITIES AND

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UNDER VERY STRICT CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH THERE WAS AN INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT, THAT THERE WAS A CEASEFIRE, NEGOTIATED BETWEEN ALL THE FIVE PARTIES AND A UNITED NATIONS FORCE. IN THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES IT SEEMED TO ME THAT WE COULD AFFORD TO RUN THE RISK OF PUTTING BRITAIN INTO A POSITION OF ACTUALLY ADMINISTERING THE COUNTRY. NOW WE'VE NOT GOT THIS. WE'VE NOT GOT A CEASEFIRE, WE'VE ONLY GOT THREE PARTIES AGREEING. IN THIS SITUATION TO PUT BRITAIN IN TO ADMINISTERING OR TO BEING INVOLVED WITH IT WOULD BE VERY FOOLISH IN MY VIEW, AND I THINK THAT IF THE RHODESIAN PEOPLE THEMSELVES ARE GOING TO BE THE FINAL ANALYSIS, GOING TO HAVE TO MAKE THIS DECISION, IT'S BY THE FIFTH PRINCIPLE WHICH IS THAT ANY SETTLEMENT MUST BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE PEOPLE OF RHODESIA AS A WHOLE. THIS WILL BE THE FINAL DECISION. IT WON'T BE MADE HERE IN LONDON OR IN WASHINGTON. IT WILL BE MADE IN RHODESIA AND THERE WAS A BRITISH GOVERNMENT THAT THOUGHT THAT THE SETTLEMENT, BEFORE WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE WHEN THE PEARCE COMMISSION WENT OUT, THEY FOUND THAT IT WASN'T ACCEPTABLE AND THEY WERE RIGHT. AND ALL I'M SAYING IS LET'S BE CAUTIOUS, AND BY ALL MEANS RECOGNISE THAT THIS IS AN IMPORTANT CHANGE. AFTER ALL, MOST OF THESE THINGS I PUT TO MR. SMITH IN APRIL OF LAST YEAR AND HE REFUSED COMPLETELY. AND SO HE HAS COME A LONG WAY. THAT'S IMPORTANT. HE'S HOWEVER GOT QUITE A LONG WAY TO GO.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH, FOREIGN SECRETARY FOR MAKING THIS COMMENT ON TONIGHT'S NEWS, NOT A SCHEDULED PART OF YOUR ACTIVITY THIS EVENING WHICH WAS TO DO WITH THE BY-ELECTION AND OUR DOMESTIC POLITICS.
END TEXT

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